A

# MODEST ADDRESS

TO THE

# CLERGY

OF THE

# CHURCH

OF

# *ENGLAND.*

By a CLERGYMAN.

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Οὐ δυναμεθα γὰρ ημὴς ἃ εἴδομεν κεῖι ἠκούσαμεν, μὴ λαλεὶν.

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# MODEST ADDRESS, &c.

AT a Time, when general Addreſſes are deafning the royal Ear, that a national enquiry may be made into national Miſconduct *; at a Time when Uproar and Diſorder grow big and violent, and the Hearts of many wax faint for the tottering condition of our Religion and Conſtitution; at ſuch a Time as this when the papal Banner is diſplayed in Triumph, and the Enemies of our Peace are advancing with haſty Steps; let me Addreſs myſelf to you, my Brethren and Companions of the Altar, you who are the bulwark of our Religion, you who are intruſted with the eternal Intereſts of Men, that you awake at this critical Juncture from your ſpiritual Lethargy, that ye be no longer

* The Author deſigned the Publication of this Addreſs in *December* laſt, but was obliged to defer it.

allured by the blandiſhments of Senſe, devoted to Grandeur and Ambition, but that Reformation and national Piety may revive and flouriſh again through your Endeavours and good Examples ; that the Arm of Providence may interpoſe at this Time to ſnatch this unthankful Nation from ſuch imminent and deadly Danger.

Far be it from me to defame or diſcredit the ſacred and moſt excellent Order of Men, the Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt: I am one, my brethren, who had the honour to be early inliſted into the Service of the ſame great Maſter; and I hope it will not be offenſive to any of you, if it be done with Seriouſneſs and Candour, to enquire at this critical Juncture, when national Depravity o'ertops all Bounds and Meaſures, how far the viſible neglect of Paſtoral Duty has been inſtrumental in letting in ſuch a torrent of Immorality as muſt, without a ſpeedy prevention, overwhelm and ſink this Nation: Nor do I preſume to lay this heavy Charge upon the Conſciences of the Clergy in general ; no, my Brethren, I ſpeak it with tranſport,

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I am perſuaded better Things of you, the exemplary and laudable Endeavours of many, the truly pious and charitable Labours of others, in turning the Hearts of the diſobedient to the Obedience of the Goſpel, have, I doubt not, been highly ſerviceable in averting the Judgments of God, and have been, as it were, a grateful ſacrifice, to ſtop that lingring vengeance which has ſo often threatned the Ruin and Deſtruction of this Kingdom; yet it is to be greatly feared too, that the inconſiderateneſs of ſome amongſt us, the inactivity and diſlike of others to do good in their miniſterial Offices have been deadly baneful to the Cauſe of Virtue, and have poiſoned the wholſom and ſalutary precepts of the Chriſtian Inſtitution.

We are bleſt with the pureſt Religion that was ever vouchſafed to the Sons of Men, a Religion that is decent and reaſonable in all its Parts, and if our Hearts and Minds were but half as firm and pure, what Proſperity and Happineſs might we not expect? If Zeal and Union for the love of God and our Religion could but once

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take root and flouriſh, we might become like *Sion* of old never to be moved: our *Jeruſalem* would then be ſo compact together, as to become ſtrong and impregnable; but I know not from whence ſhould ariſe ſuch a Spirit of infatuation that we will not behold the things which belong to our Peace: But thus it is, Men are heaping up Miſery for themſelves, and mad in procuring their own Deſtruction. Our inteſtine Feuds and Factions, malevolent and bitter Bickerings, are now, as they were formerly to the *Jewiſh* Nation, more deſtructive and hurtful to the Peace and Safety of the Kingdom, than the united Force and Power of our Enemies; and could the Shade of *Titus* riſe up amongſt us at this Hour, would there not be occaſion again for Tears, to ſee the torn and miſerable condition of a profligate divided People?

I find I have deviated a little from my principal Deſign, and have been led by the ſerioufneſs of the Subject to a long digreſſion, but I ſhall recollect myſelf again, and turn unto you, my Brethren,

Brethren, to exhort and beſeech the remiſs and negligent in their ſeveral Stewardſhips and Vocations, to conſider the importance of their ſacred Function, and to beg of Men to be reconciled to God. For if we who were hired at ſo great a Price, the promiſe of unſpeakable happineſs, ſhould be found at the laſt great Day, to have done no Work in the Vineyard, but have been all the Day idle, how miſerable will be our Condition? for the degrees of our Happineſs in a future State, will certainly be in proportion to the degrees of our diligence and induſtry here in ſerving God and promoting the Happineſs of others.

It ſhall be my Buſineſs in the remaining Part of this ſhort Work, to enquire from what evil Springs do ariſe ſuch ſtreams of Bitterneſs, what Reaſons or Cauſes can be aſſigned for ſuch a general decay of Piety, ſuch a viſible Apoſtacy from moral Goodneſs, and I ſhall endeavour to point out ſome uſeful and profitable Means, by the Practice of which, united to the divine Aſſiſtance, we may heal our civil diſeaſes and bind

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up the Wounds of Religion: And if in the Proſecution of theſe Enquiries any of you, my Brethren, ſhould be offended, let it be remembred, that no Spite or Bitterneſs is deſign'd againſt the Perſons of any; but it is time for Men to ſpeak out, it is time to put a ſtop to this national Infection, and therefore, for the ſake of *Sion I will not hold my Peace, for* Jeruſalem's *ſake I will not keep Silence.*

There are ſome (would to God it was not ſo common) who inveſted with the character of Miniſters, Ambaſſadors for Chriſt, and co-workers with him, who forgetting the Buſineſs of their Calling, and the Example of their Maſter, whoſe conſtant Employment it was to do good to the Souls of Men, do ſhamefully deſert his Service and are Enemies of the Croſs of Chriſt, Men of diſſolute Lives and Converſations, *lovers of Pleaſure more than lovers of God,* who like the Shepherds of *Iſrael,* the Prophet *Ezekiel* mentions, do feed themſelves: But *wo to the Shepherds of* Iſrael *that do feed themſelves; ſhould not the Shepherds feed the Flock? The diſ-*

*eaſed have ye not ſtrengthened, neither have ye healed that which was ſick, neither had ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye ſought that which was loſt, but with Force and Cruelty have ye ruled them; wherefore I am againſt the Shepherds, ſaith the Lord.* And it is no Wonder God ſhould be diſpleaſed with thoſe, by whoſe looſe and irregular Lives, ſupine Negligence and cruel Treatment, the Souls of thoſe committed to their Charge are permitted to live in Ignorance and Sin, and to be loſt and periſhed for ever: but whoever thou art, intruſted with ſo great a Commiſſion, conſider thyſelf and others: it ſhould be thy conſtant and daily Exerciſe to adminiſter to the Wants of Men; begin then this neceſſary Work, *for the Night may ſuddenly come upon thee, when thou mayſt not be permitted to Work.*

What if ſome of thoſe idle and unprofitable Hours which are ſpent in a round of Viſits, or it may be in the immoderate purſuit of field Amuſements, were to be more charitably employed in

the great Work of the Miniſtry? Think not thou haſt allotted enough of thy Time for ſerious Duties; becauſe thou art one Day in ſeven employed in the great Work of Salvation: Thou haſt a thouſand Opportunities every Day to do Good: Inſtruct the Ignorant by good and ſeaſonable Admonition, reclaim the Stubborn and Diſobedient by gentle and kind Reproof, viſit the Sick and drooping Spirit; comfort and exhilarate the doubting and unſettled Temper; oppoſe the Superſtition and Bigotry of *Rome*; ſoften our religious Differences and vindicate the Proteſtant Religion: O that there were ſuch a Heart and Mind in the Miniſters of the true Religion! then would the *Proteſtant* Religion, once the Admiration of the World and ſcourge of *Rome*, now faded and changed from its primitive Luſtre by the prevalence of *Atheiſm* and the Inſolencies of Popery, lift up its Head again, and ſurmount every Oppoſition: The precepts and good Inſtructions of the truly virtuous are extremely perſuaſive, and whoever teaches by the Example of his

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own good Life, does certainly teach to the beſt Purpoſe, but whoever he is who lives a vicious and profligate Life, tho' he had the Tongue of Angels and underſtood all Myſteries and had all Knowledge, yet never could he be of ſervice to promote Religion: No Man would ever receive the Counſel he offers, when he is convinced by his irregular Behaviour that he himſelf does not regard it: Our Wickedneſs is arrived at its full Maturity, all Orders and Ranks of Men have caught the Contagion, this is thy Triumph, O Immorality! no wonder then Men are lewd and factious, contentious and diſturbers of the public Tranquillity, no wonder Men are falſe and treacherous, baſe and cowardly, corrupt and inſolent, when the Fear of God is caſt behind them, and Men are become abominable in their doings.

Upon you ye Magiſtrates of the Realm, ye who are the Miniſters of God too for the public Safety our Continuance as a Nation greatly depends, exert then at this critical Juncture your utmoſt Power to ſtand up againſt the Workers

of Iniquity, contribute by your Zeal and good Examples to the maintainance of the true Religion and the ſuppreſſing of Vice and Immorality. But as no Order or Set of Men is ſo peculiarly adapted for this neceſſary and uſeful Work of Reformation, no Men who have ſuch powerful Means and Opportunities to be ſerviceable for this great End, as you my Brethren of the holy Function; to you I ſhall addreſs myſelf again, and ſhall point out ſome viſible Neglects in the imperfect Diſcharge of your miniſterial Duties, which I fear have been highly injurious to the Credit and Reputation of the reformed Religion—

It muſt hurt the Peace of every ſober Chriſtian to ſee the deplorable abuſe of public Worſhip: God has appointed but one Day in ſeven for the exerciſe of religious Duties, and an Hour or two is the moſt of our Time required for this neceſſary Performance; yet as if it was but a ſmall Thing to diſhonour God, how hardly are ſome perſuaded to conſecrate even this pittance of Time for the Service of God and their own Happineſs? Amazing!

Amazing! That Creatures who every Day experience ſo many ſingular Bleſſings from Providence, ſhould be guilty of ſuch foul Ingratitude; the very Heathens themſelves will riſe up in Judgment againſt us, and be our Accuſers: For no Nation or Age of the World did ever yet behold ſuch complicated Scenes of Wickedneſs and Folly as are in ſome Places exhibited upon the Chriſtian Sabbath. Were we to introduce a Heathen into ſome of our Religous Aſſemblies; to ſee ſuch a mixt Behaviour, of People talking, laughing, ſleeping, and ſome few praying, would he not conclude it a Place for Merriment or an Exchange for Buſineſs? For ſuch a medley of Behaviour is ſometimes ſeen in the Time of divine Worſhip as the moſt brutiſh Idolaters would bluſh to behold; inſomuch that the very worſhipping of *Mercury* by throwing Stones, or *Hercules* by curſing, was almoſt as decent and ſober a Cuſtom.

But we above all Men, my Brethren, muſt not be aſtoniſhed at ſuch brutal Indecencies; we have largely, I fear, contributed

tributed hereto by neglecting the Morals of Youth, and leaving them unacquainted with the fundamentals of Religion: The Catechiſm our Church has appointed is an excellent ſummary of chriſtian Doctrine, and our Canon requires it to be conſtantly uſed every Sabbath, but how far this is complied with I need not mention: Now if ſome pains had been uſed to explain the Catechiſm, and to inſtruct Children in the Principles of their Religion, we never had been ſo infeſted and over-run with Error or Superſtition, nor would ſo many of the common People have revolted from the reformed Religion to the Corruptions and Superſtition of *Rome*: If early Piety and Virtue were planted in the Minds of Youth they would thrive and flouriſh exceedingly, but if Thorns and Briers are permitted to ariſe and choke theſe tender Plants through the neglect of a careleſs Huſbandman, he will one Day be ſeverely accountable for this ſad Miſmanagement: If no pains are taken (which is too much the Caſe) to inſtill into Children the Fundamentals of Religion

ligion they will afterwards grow cool and indifferent about it as they grow up to Manhood; they are then too wiſe for Inſtruction, and too aukward to begin to learn; ſo that the want of early Tuition is the foundation of their future Miſery: They cannot then be perſuaded to partake of the bleſſed Sacrament, becauſe they are ignorant, they pretend, of its Nature and Deſign, tho' God has made the neglect of this poſitive Duty as incompatible with Salvation as the neglect of any one Commandment; thus ignorant of their chriſtian Duties for want of early Inſtruction they become an eaſy Prey to Seducers, or take Shelter in Infidelity, caſting off every Ordinance of God, and living as without God in the World.

That this is the ſad Condition of Numbers, too much Experience convinces; and one would think the Miniſters of the Goſpel were born of Rocks and equalled the Brutes in Cruelty, if they can behold with indifference ſuch Myriads ſinking in Miſery and not ſtretch out their Hands to ſave them: I do not

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ſay the Clergy can force Men to be Good and Virtuous; this we know is altogether impracticable, but then much might be done by frequent Inſtruction, by Perſuaſion, and by good Examples; If *our Light was to ſhine before Men that they might ſee our good Works*, it is charitably to be preſumed they would ſtrive to imitate; but if *blinded through the deceitfulneſs of Sin*, they are permitted to wander in the wide Paths of Error and Ignorance, no wonder they are loſt and bewildered—Give me leave to put a Caſe to any of you, my Brethren; Suppoſe ſome powerful Patron was to ſollicit your Vote and Intereſt with your Pariſhioners to ſupport his Election, and was to back the Petition with a Promiſe of a hearty Living, which of you in this Caſe would be remiſs and negligent? Would ye not cloſely apply to every Voter? And ſuppoſe ſome unreaſonable Excuſes were urged by ſome for their not complying; I doubt not but ye would uſe your utmoſt Rhetoric and try every plauſible Argument to remove ſuch idle Excuſes: Now if the

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ſame Endeavours were uſed to bring Men to the public Worſhip of God, and to be Partakers of the holy Communion, I doubt not but they would have a powerful Influence upon the Minds of many; for I cannot ſuppoſe Men to be ſo obſtinately bent upon future Miſery as to prefer it to a ſtate of Happineſs.

And ſuppoſing it ſhould coſt us a little Labour and Trouble to do this it would ſoon be over, but the Comforts ariſing from ſuch laudable Endeavours will remain with us for the reſt of our Lives; nor ſhall we loſe our Reward at the great Day, when thoſe *who have converted many to Righteouſneſs will ſhine as the Stars in Heaven.* What if ſome uſeful Books, which are to be purchaſed at an eaſy Price, were to be diſtributed as Occaſion ſerves to the Poor and Indigent? And ſome of our vacant Hours (for many we muſt own we have) ſet apart and allotted to explain and expound them: And if Men will not be

perſuaded after ſuch hearty Endeavours as theſe to be punctual at their Devotions, we muſt have recourſe, as the Canon directs, to the civil Power, and this perhaps might be very Inſtrumental in bringing Men to the Obedience of the Goſpel: Were we to take up that noble Reſolution of the Royal Pſalmiſt, *to behave ourſelves wiſely in a perfect way, and to walk in our houſes with a perfect heart*, this would be a means to revive again what is almoſt expiring in this profligate Age, family Religion; and it would highly redound to the honor of the eſtabliſhed Clergy, to be more exemplary to their Families in ſerving God, and unblameable in their Converſations.

We may be diſpleaſed, if we will, at the Abilities of Men in Power, and may fret at the Miſconduct of thoſe who were employed to fight our Battles; the unproſperous Succeſs of our Arms, united to our civil Diſſenſions, may reaſonably diſturb our Peace, and make

make us uneaſy ; but if we will ſeriouſly enquire into the Cauſes and Nature of Things, we ſhall find that a want of Religion and moral Virtue are the true and principal Cauſes of our preſent Diſorders : for if our Lives and Properties, our Liberties, and, what more valuable yet, our excellent Religion, are to be defended by a ſet of Men, who, inſtead of being more religious than others, as they are more eminently expoſed to Danger, are nevertheleſs more profligate and abandoned, little I fear is to be expected from our Fleets and Armies ; for it is confirmed to us from the Experience of *Solomon*, that the Wicked will flee when no Man purſueth, but the Righteous is bold as a Lion. The wiſe Man does not aſſert from this Place, that every wicked Man is a Coward, or that every good and religious Man is as bold as a Lion ; his Meaning is plain and obvious ; That wickedneſs naturally tends to diſhearten and make men Cowards, but Righteouſneſs exciteth to Valour ; and the Truth of this

is evident, for the wicked muſt be more than a Soldier who dares to defy the God of Armies; or can hazard his life with indifference, when he knows if he falls in Battle he is loſt and undone for ever: But this is not the caſe of the Righteous; he is firm and unſhaken in the midſt of Danger, ſecure in his own Integrity; the inſtruments of War that are dealing Death around him turn his Thoughts upon God and his Protection; if he lives he is comforted by the Applauſe of an honeſt Conſcience, and if he falls he is happy for ever: ſo that we ſee Wickedneſs and Immorality naturally tend to make Men Cowards, and not only deprives them of the divine Protection, but diſqualifies them alſo for the Service of their Country.

A ſmall Acquaintance with Hiſtory, particularly that of the *Jewiſh* Nation, will ſufficiently teach us, that the Proſperity or Miſery of a Nation depends upon national Behaviour; when the *Jews* were conſtant and hearty in the worſhip

worſhip of the true God, and ſerved him in Truth and Sincerity, they miraculouſly prevailed and proſpered; but when they broke off from the ſervice of God, and became idolatrous and deadly wicked, no Nation ever experienced more fatal Calamities: and how long it will pleaſe God to defend us, who are more than *Jews* in Iniquity, from the Hands of our Enemies, we cannot tell; but except ſome immediate ſtop be put to that prodigious Impiety which every where prevails, we may ſoon bid a laſting Farewel to every thing that is dear and valuable; but we have yet Time and Opportunity, my Brethren, to conſider and amend our Lives, and by reforming ourſelves to promote the Reformation of others: If we have hitherto neglected the Work of the Miniſtry let us now make amends by exerting a double Diligence. If we will not defend our Religion with as much Warmth and Zeal as the Enemies of our Peace exert to undermine and ruin it, it will one

Day

Day be irrecoverably loſt and taken from us: Be ye therefore *inſtant in Seaſon, out of Seaſon, reprove, rebuke, exhort; ſtand faſt in one Spirit, with one Mind,* in Love and Unity *ſtriving together for the Faith of the Goſpel.* Let us ſeriouſly conſider the Importance of our Office, and the valuable Treaſure committed to our Charge; they are the Sheep of Chriſt whom he bought by his Death, and for whom he was contented to be betrayed and crucified. Let us therefore take care of the Flock, *not by conſtraint but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready Mind, and when the chief Shepherd ſhall appear, ye ſhall* receive a Crown that fadeth not away.

It is time for us to call upon thoſe who are intruſted to our Care, to beg of God in this time of Danger to go forth with our Fleets and Armies; it is time for us to awaken every one who is remiſs and negligent, as the Mariner did *Jonah* in that dreadful Storm, ſaying, *what meaneſt thou, O Sleeper? Ariſe, call upon*

*upon thy God.* If ſo be God will think upon us, that we periſh not. Thus if we will turn unto God by a general Repentance, God may be intreated to ſpare us, and to continue us ſtill a free and happy People; but if we will ſtill do wickedly, we ſhall be conſumed, both we and our King.

*FINIS.*

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